

5-1-1987

# Searching

Lisa (Elizabeth) Forster

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.rit.edu/theses>

---

## Recommended Citation

Forster, Lisa (Elizabeth), "Searching" (1987). Thesis. Rochester Institute of Technology. Accessed from

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Thesis/Dissertation Collections at RIT Scholar Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses by an authorized administrator of RIT Scholar Works. For more information, please contact [ritscholarworks@rit.edu](mailto:ritscholarworks@rit.edu).

ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of  
The College of Fine and Applied Arts  
in Candidacy for the Degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

SEARCHING

LISA FORSTER  
(ELIZABETH)

MAY 1987

## APPROVALS

Adviser: Philip Bornarth/\_\_\_\_\_

Date: 5/22/87

Associate Adviser: Leonard Urso/\_\_\_\_\_

Date: 5/21/87

Associate Adviser: Sheila Wells/\_\_\_\_\_

Date: 5/21/87

Special Assistant to the  
Dean for Graduate Affairs: Philip Bornarth/\_\_\_\_\_

Date: 5/22/87

Dean, College of  
Fine and Applied Arts: Dr. Robert Johnston/\_\_\_\_\_

Date: 5/22/87

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby grant permission to the  
Wallace Memorial Library of RIT, to reproduce my Thesis in  
whole or in part. Any reproduction will not be for commercial  
use or profit.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, prefer to be contacted each time a  
request for production is made, I can be reached at the  
following address.

Lisa Forster  
3041 Atlantic Ave.  
Penfield, New York, 14526

Date: May 21, 1987

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Introduction</u>	v
<u>Concept</u>	1
<u>Design and Composition</u>	8
<u>Media-Technical Search</u>	15
<u>Conclusion</u>	21
<u>Bibliography</u>	22
<u>Illustrations</u>	24

The purpose of this Thesis has been an exploration of the means of composing paintings that are personally expressive, meaningful in concept, and aesthetically exciting, while being structurally well designed and executed. An intensive search in the areas of concept, or idea development; design and composition; as well as the technical concerns in choosing media and the methodology of its use has resulted in growth, increased knowledge, and many new discoveries. Each area has been systematically explored in great depth in a productive and effective sequence. The process involved in the development of concept was researched through many avenues. The areas of art philosophy, human development, psychology, mythology, historic viewpoints, artist's diaries and writings, artist's biographies, interviews, and personal experience have been considered. The study of design and composition has been extensive. Both pictorial material, sculpture, and writings of theory have been studied. Investigation of varying media and techniques was undertaken to determine the best means of giving visible form to the concepts developed. This was done by researching along with a lot of trial and error. Each part of this investigation and working process has contributed to the body of work that evolved.

## CONCEPT

A work of art is a vision, an idea, a concept, or a thought translated into visible form. It is form given to perceptions. These perceptions are derived from the life experiences of the artist.

"Art has its roots in real life. Art may affirm its life-giving soil or repudiate it wholly. It may mock as bitterly as did Goya, be partisan, as was Daumier, discover beauty within the sordid and real as did Toulouse Lautrec. Art may luxuriate in life positively and affirmatively with Renoir, or Matisse, or Rubens, or Vermeer. It may turn to the nebulous horizons of sense-experience with the Post-Impressionists, the Cubists, the various orders of Abstractionists, but in any case it is life itself as it chances to exist that furnishes the stimulus for art." <sup>1</sup>

An artist responds to the world around him in many ways. All of his senses, visual, olfactory, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic, take in impressions. His intellect processes this information. His sense of spirit and energy give importance and value. His individual kinesthetics influence the dynamics perceived. The artist's feelings, fears, and pleasures are part of his thinking and color his mode of perceiving. Therefore, while an experience is an external stimulus, it is interpreted by the artist uniquely because of his being; the sum total of his mind, soul, and body. It becomes important then, for the artist to understand his being. An understanding of his inner-self, personal sense of reality, values, individual rhythms, kinesthetics, spirit, and energy is of consequence. It helps him in selecting

1. Shahn, Ben, The Shape of Content, pg. 7.

meaningful modes of expression. This knowledge coupled with a sense of trust in his intuition allows the artist to relax and go with the flow of his expression. Thus, experiences influence the artist, but the artist's individuality influences the perception of these experiences and how they will be translated into visible form.

" Forms in art arise from the impact of idea upon material, or the impinging of the mind upon material. They stem out of the human wish to formulate ideas, to recreate them into entities, so that meanings will not depart fitfully as they do from the mind, so that thinking and belief and attitudes may endure as actual things.

For form is not just the intention of content, it is the embodiment of content. Form is based, first upon a supposition, a theme. Form is second, a marshalling of materials, the inert matter in which the theme is to be cast. Form is third, a setting of boundaries, of limits, the whole extent of idea, but no more, an outer shape of idea. Form is , next, the relating of inner shapes to outer limits, the initial establishing of harmonies. Form is further, the abolishing of excessive content, of content that falls outside the true limits of the theme. It is abolishing of excessive materials, whatever material is extraneous to inner harmony, to the order of shapes now established. Form is thus a discipline, an ordering, according to the needs of content."<sup>2</sup>

2. Shahn, Ben, The Shape of Content, pg. 70.

2.



The form given to a work of art then derives from the idea or concept of the artist. It gives visible shape to his thoughts. It extends his reality beyond his own being. The idea then, exists in time and space as a material entity. It becomes available for others to perceive.

Perception, while individual, can be universal as well. Carl Jung describes our unconscious mind as containing the "collective unconscious" information from all of man's past discoveries and achievements.<sup>3</sup> This means that the artist as well as the viewer can draw upon this reservoir. The artist creating from his inner intuitive sensibilities can utilize his unconscious in his creative process. The symbolism and images that arise can be universal as well as personal for both the artist and the viewer. It can become a communication between them. The artist's creation becomes a "visible pattern that represents a symbolic statement about the human condition".<sup>4</sup>

An idea or concept that has meaning for the artist, one that has a strong identification with his values and feelings of emotional involvement, can allow for an expression of greater impact. David Levine puts it strongly.

"To be genuinely important, a work of art must contain evidence of the artist's concern for or with his subject; conversely, superficial involvement in the subject itself cannot in his view produce good painting".<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, it is important that an artist express that which is of personal importance to his own psyche or being. Although his art should be an expression of his time, he needs to search out and discover those ideas which are truly an important part of his being.

3. Jung, Carl, Man and His Symbols.

4. Arnheim, Rudolph, The Power of the Center, pg. xi.

5. Buechner, Thomas, The Arts of David Levine, pg. x



With these ideas in mind, this Thesis study began. It was a time to search out and discover the ideas or concepts that were of the most intense interest and most personally meaningful. It was necessary for me to look internally, to explore my inner self, to determine values, rhythms, kinesthetics, ways of perceiving, feelings, energy fields, spirituality, and thought patterns. Next it was important to assess the experiences that had had the greatest impact and for which there was the stimulation or motivation for visual expression. I needed to find ideas from my experiences that called for communication in visible form, that had left strong impressions in my mind, and that had not previously been exhausted or solved in my previous painting experiences. It was my goal to explore new territory.

One of the areas where I felt much new territory could be explored was in working with figures. Having models available allowed this study to be possible. I programmed my time to concentrate on working from the figure to better understand the structure, volume, and characteristics. This concentration helped me shift my attention to the study of organic forms, as opposed to the period preceding this study, where I had studied architectural forms and structures. Studying the figure for this prolonged period in an intense way, yielded good results for me from many points of view. My level of proficiency changed and my interest held. These paintings and drawings were intended to be studies, not complex pictorial statements. Yet, they were very satisfying and played an important role in my progress. After the period of closely observing the figure itself, I was able to extend my focus to also include the figure's environment. The final paintings in my Thesis study are not figure paintings. However, one can find many figures appearing in non-obvious ways with a little searching and imagination. My subconscious mind has included them. I was intrigued with this phenomena.

Another set of ideas was brewing simultaneously. I had spent a month in the mountains of Austria the summer before beginning this program. I had an urge to express the impressions from this experience. A new way for this to happen eluded me. So at the mid-point of my study, I returned to the Alps, this time to Switzerland for more research. Driving mountain passes, hiking trails in the mountains, and photographing, rekindled the impressions and the stored images in my memory bank. To produce literal images was not my goal. So while I took in individual views, an overall essence or sense of the spirit was the most pertinent direction of my scrutiny. Part of what seemed to impress me in addition to the sights, was the atmosphere and sense of space. My mind consciously and unconsciously recorded color sequences, the configurations of rock formations, the patterns of dark rock against the glacial snow, the flow patterns and dynamics of water cascading down mountain streams, and many other fascinating bits of data.

At the end of the summer, more visual data was stored from a trip to Grand Manan Island, New Brunswick, Canada. It is an island in the Bay of Fundy with very unusual geological features. One side of the island has 200 foot high rock cliffs that meet the sea abruptly. The water laps gently up against this rock face in times of quiet seas. In times of stormy seas, the waves crash against the rocks, sending spray and foam into the air in beautiful dynamic patterns. The rhythmic forms were somewhat predictable, yet complex and never quite the same. Watching this ballet of surf is always mesmerizing for me as I identify with the motion and dynamics. The other side of the island is at sea level with quiet coves, uninhabited beaches, little villages nestled beside the ocean in protected bays, and views of other little islands reaching out into the Bay of Fundy. The almost 30 foot tides change the shoreline's appearance rapidly providing an everchanging interaction between the rocks, sand, and water. Again I drove around, hiked extensively, sketched, photographed, waded, canoed, went out on a small fishing vessel, day dreamed, asked questions, and absorbed.



I totally immersed myself in the experience, again letting my conscious and unconscious mind respond. The intensity of this involvement was to be of great benefit later as these many impressions found their way into my paintings. That the sea was meeting with the mountainous rock faces was bringing together for me two compelling fascinations. All through my life I have been an undaunted climber and water person. Some inner force, a kind of compulsion, irresistible to me, caused me to climb from early childhood, not just for new vantage points, but also for the physical appeal of the act of climbing. Water, be it a pool, lake, or ocean, has always been worth a pilgrimage and is restoring to my soul. I like to look, but also be in or on the water, moving in it or sensuously moving on its surface. My present addiction to sailboarding, or windsurfing, as it is also called, meets this need. Both these fascinations involve visual elements of experience, but are also kinesthetic. The more this Thesis project and research progressed, the more apparent it became to me that the merging of both the visual and kinesthetic were at the very core of my being. This discovery was to profoundly effect the final result and is important in viewing the final paintings. That these final paintings were very personal statements may not necessarily be evident from casual observation. While that did not effect their aesthetic quality or objective value, it was important to me. A personal or individual artistic statement in this body of work was one of my goals.

The sense of kinesthetics as being of vital importance to me needed to be renewed in my mind. This identification with motion, with being actively and physically involved, was significant. Moving in and through space, feeling the wind against me, whether bicycling, sailing, sailboarding, skiing, or hiking, is exhilarating. For me, this movement or motion is rhythmic, There is an inner sense of music that is kinesthetically expressed. To translate these sensations or dynamics into visible form in my paintings became a challenge.

While I attempted to understand myself and my own characteristics, I continued to study and read about the artistic ideas of others. I was interested in the thought processes, motivations, personal symbolism, and concept development of other artists. Time spent in this research both in reading and interviewing was of great value. There seemed to be patterns that emerged. Some artists depended primarily on their own inner dreams or intuition as the source of their expression; and this then was their primary focus. Others relied on the experiences in their immediate environment as they saw them and transformed them into pictorial form from their observations. The degree to which this group altered or interpreted what they perceived varied greatly. There also emerged a group of artists whose ideas were generated directly from manipulating their materials. In this group concepts were not intellectualized before the work was begun, but appeared or developed during the progress of the work. Other artists attempted to integrate these methods. They combined their intuitive inner sense with their external observations and also allowed their media to generate directions as well. I explored working in each of these ways during my Thesis study. While each method had its merits, the latter method seemed to work best for me.

In producing the body of Thesis work, I set some goals for myself. I wanted a personal translation from my own primary observations and/or experiences. I sought a non-literal translation, one that contained the essence of the concept. In this work it was a goal to promote my subjective involvement in the interpretation, to give visual form to my feelings. I wished to combine my intuitive responses with my intellectual ideas while allowing the media to generate additional dimensions. The task then, was to find a way for me to meet these goals, to give form to my ideas, to design and compose a series of paintings with value and meaning.



## DESIGN AND COMPOSITION

Composition is defined as the arrangement of elements into an aesthetically unified whole. It is putting together parts to create a new, harmonious entity. The elements of shape, value, hue, line, and intensity, are manipulated. In two dimensional work it involves the formation of a pattern, an interaction between negative and positive forms. The artist must have an understanding of the elements of design. The individual choices each artist makes shape the composition and give it uniqueness.

Many of the paintings that preceded my Thesis study had been composed geometrically. The structure derived in an architectural manner. An axial format was commonly used. Angular shapes tended to dominate. There was an exploration of intentionally flattened space. There was however, a full use of color, in hue, value, and intensity in the work. One central theme was explored that could be understood in a fairly obvious way even though an attempt was made to provide counterpoint. It was time to look for other design solutions.

In designing and composing this body of work, it was my intention to stretch my perimeters. A list of goals was formed. There were areas or ideas that I wished to explore, comprehend, and incorporate. I wished the work to be, to have or to include:

- Complexity-while maintaining unity
- Unity of form and concept
- Full use of pictorial space
- Spatial depth-manipulation of the illusion of third dimension
- Use of organic forms
- Non-static forms
- Strong dynamics
- Rhythmic sense of form and interval
- A sense of light

Sequencing for a sense of movement  
(fluid movement)  
Kinesthetic gracefulness  
Interweaving of forms  
Interweaving of edges  
A sense of spontaneity  
A strong sense of structure  
Color related to concept  
Use of personal refined color sense  
Interplay of warm against cool colors  
Full value range  
Use of descriptive line-drawing  
Use of personal calligraphy  
Opaque drawing interplaying with areas of  
transparencies  
An interplay of active areas with quiet open areas

Incorporating all of these components with aesthetic success seemed awesome. Yet working in this direction was where I wished to concentrate. The pathway to the end was not clear for me in the beginning. I groped, struggled, and experienced many frustrations. At times, it seemed as though each direction I took was unacceptable and sent me back to square one again. The pieces of the puzzle did not fall easily into place. It was necessary for me to take circuitous routes over and over.

When one has established a vocabulary of solutions that are successful and incorporated as part of one's production, it requires a strong shaking of the tree, so to speak, to change. This change was desired. To change required building a new vocabulary. To build a new vocabulary required exploration into less familiar territory. Territories or areas for exploration were thus mapped out and systematically approached. Each area of study added to the vocabulary and slowly and sequentially the desired change took place.



Since my experience in figure drawing from life had been limited, this became an area I wished to explore. I began with the intent of establishing a competence in understanding and portraying the form and structure of the figure from accurate observation. The color characteristics that helped define the form were of interest to me, as well. Capturing the presence of the model was also a concern. I focused my entire concentration in this direction. The many, many drawings I did during this period were studies. As the poses by the models were of relatively short duration, I concentrated on the figures themselves. However, the placement on the page of the figure was thoughtfully considered. The standards I set for myself were high and required many hours of work. Finally I moved on to also incorporate the pictorial space around the model, concerning myself with the context as well as the figure. I, then, was concerned with establishing a spatial sense within the pictorial format. One set of paintings and drawings was an attempt to deal with several figures in one composition. I played with the spacing between the figures and the tensions created thereby. I tried multiple imaging, that is overlaying one over another to create interesting interactions. I referred to my sketchbooks and did a series of composite scenes with figures. Somehow these seemed too close to illustrations to satisfy my goals. I did a series of lithographs with slightly hidden figures, more abstracted. At another period of time, I shifted my concentration to a study of volume. I focused on establishing a strong sense of volume through distortion and exaggeration of the form. All of these studies honed my skills and added to my repertoire. I acquired more knowledge from which to draw.<sup>6</sup>

The idea of using my travel experiences in the mountains and in Canada persisted. The rock cliffs meeting the sea continued to be an inspiration for a series of paintings. Many steps took place along the way toward the final realization of the concept intended.

6. See Illustrations, 1-7.

While in Grand Manan, Canada, I back-packed my drawing and painting gear to the locations I found inspiring. I drew directly onto watercolor paper with permanent ink so that each line would have the direct expressive quality felt at the moment of observation. Drawings were done that aimed at recording what I saw without major changes in composition. Others were done where choices of what to include, exclude, or rearrange were freely exercised. In these, essences rather than realities were recorded. I also did a series of watercolors using both methods. At the same time I took a series of photographs to record what the camera perceived. These were intended to gather data. The aim was not to find a ready-made composition. The compositions I envisioned were to be more encompassing than any one particular view.<sup>7</sup>

The next step was to translate one of the pen drawings into another form.<sup>8</sup> Using the basic composition established in the pen drawing, I did a pastel drawing. It was a translation in more abstracted form. I worked intuitively, weaving the forms and colors in an expressive way. It captured a sense of atmosphere and some of the mood through use of color in very close value range. It was an impression of the reality.<sup>9</sup> A second version was done in the same way. It took on a character of its own even though begun from the same reference. The colors were changed, as well as the value patterns and shapes. In this drawing the space was considered differently. There was an intentional flattening of the spatial field and a zeroing in closer to the vertical cliff forms.<sup>10</sup>

- 7. See Illustrations, 8-9.
- 8. See Illustration, 10.
- 9. See Illustration, 11.
- 10. See Illustration, 12.

Expanding the idea onto a large canvas followed. The same drawing was again the basic composition chosen as a point of reference. The color in the first pastel version was also used as an inspiration. This acrylic painting was painted intuitively concentrating on the interaction of interesting shapes and color. It was painted at close range while concentrating on the abstract forms without viewing the references. When the painting was viewed from a distance, it surprised me that the landscape from which it sprung was so apparent. The atmospheric quality seemed to dominate and become stronger than the geological features or forms. This effect was consistent with the experience, but had not been consciously recorded. It intrigued me that this atmospheric quality again intuitively appeared, altering the weight of the composition in yet another way.<sup>11</sup>

Simultaneously, I painted a 30" x 40" canvas with even different dynamics although still springing from the same drawing as a source. This time the shapes or pieces of color were larger and flatter and more angular. It has a more active set of tensions, but is still quite atmospheric. The fog shrouded sense of spatial subtlety is definitely in character with the experience.<sup>12</sup> In each case, the compositions were begun from the same drawing, but altered both intentionally and intuitively as they progressed. This series had a lot to communicate about the experience that prompted it. By beginning each time with the same idea, it was possible to play with different ways of arranging the pictorial elements and then analyze the results of these slight changes.

11. See Illustration, 13.

12. See Illustration, 14.



The next two versions, both on 4' x 6' canvases didn't survive. They felt much too static to me. The cliff forms stood so solidly that one's eye could not progress through the picture plane in an interesting way. One was so sweet that I was reminded of the sentimentality of the 19th Century. This was not my aim. It was psychologically necessary for me to destroy it to go on. It was painted over as was its companion. In both of these paintings, I had used the same reference as the others, but again was experimenting with changing the composition slightly, shifting the focus to see what would happen. What happened was not acceptable, but quite educational.

The level of frustration at this point caused me to paint over one of these canvases with a vengeance, subjecting it to all forms of abuse and experimentation. Since in my mind it was expendable, I explored freely on it, adding a complexity of elements, strong value changes, visual and actual textures, and elements of stronger color. Finally it was turned vertically and some neutral areas blocked in. The textural excitement and strong contrasts totally transformed the idea and extended its dimensions. The painting reads quite abstractly now with many other ideas incorporated as well. While I had painted many paintings in oils and acrylics in this same bold, abstract manner, it was a long time ago. Having specialized in recent years in totally and thoroughly researching watercolors, my thinking was geared to the possibilities of that medium more than it should have been. While this painting did not contain the kind of spatial dynamics and movement that was my ultimate goal, it had many exciting things happening in it that I wanted to explore further in the next paintings. It became then the beginning of the next series.<sup>13</sup>

13. See Illustration, 15.

As this next series of paintings began, the concept began to change its focus from the land and rock masses to more and more emphasis on the water forms. The paintings were painted abstractly and intended to be so. However, it became evident that another part of the experiences I had had was influencing the choices I made. Shifting the focus meant that different kinds of shapes appeared. I was able to more freely manipulate the spatial elements. I worked hard to get a complexity of interesting calligraphic shapes that overlapped, had intermingling edges, and sequenced in such a way that it would cause one to perceive motion. I used sequencing of color and value for this effect as well as to create a deep sense of space. The use of cool, neutral color in areas helped to create depth on the picture plane. Some areas had close transitions from one color to another that were quite subtle. Other areas had strong contrasts between colors. Some areas had brilliant bits of color in full intensity playing against the neutrals or their color compliments. I played areas of visual quietness against active, dynamic calligraphy. Complex textural areas were contrasted with open areas. I worked to get the break-up of space to be such that one would feel as though the painting extended or pushed beyond the confines of its physical boundaries. I wanted an interaction of the figure and ground elements. While working for these effects, it was also important to me that a strong sense of structure was created. The paintings went through many transformations to get the desired results. Determination and persistence paid off. As I moved ahead on some, the next one was more easily resolved. The final paintings chosen for my Thesis Exhibition satisfied many of the goals that I had set for this study.<sup>14</sup>

14. See Illustrations, 16-20.



## MEDIA-TECHNICAL SEARCH

While an artist must look for his own ideas and concepts, he must also discover the design and composition solutions that serve as the most successful means of giving visual form to them. At the same time the choice of media that will best realize his intentions must be determined. An artist in the 20th Century has many materials at his disposal. The influence of the media that an artist chooses may not seem as important in the formation of the work to the viewer or art historian. They tend to view the finished product and based on their own knowledge or that which they have acquired from others, determine their views. This vantage point differs greatly from that of the artist who is actively involved in creating the work. There is a bond between the artist and the tools and materials that give realization to his intentions. During the creative process the materials themselves may influence the direction that takes place because of their inherent properties. These properties could be the chemical or physical characteristics, the molecular structure and its ability to be manipulated, the visual sensations that are perceived or sensed, and/or the limitations or possibilities of the scope of their applications. Characteristics such as its opacity or transparency effect its use. Viscosity is a factor. The chemical interaction between layers, if used, becomes important. That the materials will adhere to the surface when a ground surface is used is important. The malleability or forming possibilities, the techniques of joining or constructing, and/or the structural stability of the work, influence the design both in its inception and during the working process. The original concept may change as the artist adapts and responds to what is taking place during his creative process. This information was important for me to research for each media or material that I used or explored.



As a practicing artist for many years with an insatiable curiosity, I have explored many materials. Having this experience allows me to be able to choose the media that best suits the concept or idea that is the inspiration for a piece of work. Years have been devoted to drawing media. At one time collage and assemblage techniques were explored. At a time when studio space permitted, oil paints were the chosen media. A body of large, bold, abstract paintings resulted. Researching the use of acrylics followed this period. They were used in many ways from thin transparent applications to thick opaque applications. These varied from small impressionistic paintings to large abstractions. The possibilities of the printmaking media were then explored from silkscreening, etching, lithography, and woodcutting to monoprinting. A period of time was spent doing welded steel sculpture, welding both rod and heavy sheet steel. In addition to these areas of concentration as a practicing artist, my undergraduate studies included work in ceramics, textiles, weaving, enameling, jewelry making, graphic design, and photography. The time immediately preceding this Thesis study was devoted to a thorough exploration of the full range of watercolor painting. The background of this wide range of media exploration was to influence this Thesis study in many ways. This study then, was a extension of my ongoing study, where each component of past study or production was incorporated or drawn from in the creation of the new body of work.

In working out the means to express a concept or an idea for a series of work, It has become a habit for me to go through a sequence of studies in various media. Some of these early studies contain qualities that do not appear in the later work. As the artist, it is important to be open-minded and value each stage in the creative sequence for its merit in the development of the idea or concept intended. As the viewer or historian, it is important not to

make judgements that are out of context or to place a value on a piece that is not valid to the intent of the work or sequence. An individual study in a sequence of works may expore but a fragment of the concept being explored. When working on location, I usually backpack many materials with me. To record detail, I may choose to do a fine line pen and ink drawing. At the same time, I will also do graphite studies that give me information about the value patterns that I see or the ways that I choose to arrange them. Watercolor studies can be used to express the effects of light and those of color. Markers are handy to carry and quick to use to record both linear characteristics and dynamics. A quickly done expressive line can become a shorthand for me in recalling that which inspired me. These ways of gathering data by using several media help me to record the many impressions that flood into my conscious and unconscious mind. Studio work that follows profits from this multi-faceted approach. The data recorded in the primary experience is used or left out by intent according to whether it is relevant to the work that emerges. This working pattern was used in this study. Studies were made in more than one medium and were approached in different ways.

At the time this study began, I had been specializing in watercolor painting. In order to develop an expertise in this field, I sought out nationally known, producing and exhibiting watercolor artists. Watercolor artists in the United States use the medium in a wide variety of ways. I sought a complete understanding of the aesthetic qualities, as well as learning the chemical properties, and the characteristics of the materials available on the market. My study included testing all the paint brands, color interactions, (Chemical interactions are different than with other media.), paper brands and weights, awareness of the



current leading watercolor artists, and study of the great works from the past. The kind of knowledge I sought and gained was highly specialized. Since any one artist's experience is not necessarily comprehensive, it could only be gained by learning what each of many specialists had discovered. These ideas or the information gathered was tested in my own work. It was in the middle of one of these testing periods that my Thesis study began. I was working on a series of paintings that were being produced to test an individual brand of German-made paint for color brilliancy and intensity. Watercolors were used also for the first figure studies.

At this time exposure to Sheila Wells' strong dynamic pastels excited and inspired me. She had attained a highly complex surface quality that did not interfere with her concept, but realized its presence in a rich and an exciting way. With no previous experience with this medium, I started from square one. My beginning efforts were crude indeed and humbling. Facility came with time and dedication. The quality that I sought was not a blended tonal effect, but the multiple layering of linear strokes that would build up a surface richness while still describing the form. Hour after hour was invested. The encouragement of others helped during the many moments of frustration. Eventually, I began toning the paper with a middle value of a neutral color with either watercolor or acrylic paint. These backgrounds were not a single even tone, but had a pattern. My goal then became to achieve an interesting interaction between the figure drawn with pastels and the painted background.<sup>15</sup> I experimented also with pastel pencils, colored charcoal pencils, and soft pastels on a wide variety of papers. The qualities that developed from the layering of linear strokes of varying colors, were exciting to study. I wanted to find a way to incorporate this rich surface quality into my paintings.<sup>16</sup>

15. See Illustrations, 4-7.

16. See Illustrations, 1-7,11-12.

I discovered other qualities that I wished to use in my paintings in exploring other media during this time as well. In creating two stained glass windows, I played with a type of light quality. The leaded lines, and color sequences created a strong sense of motion. The inspiration came from some quick sketches that related to windsurfing, thus involving motion. Working in metals allowed me an opportunity to manipulate three-dimensional forms. The first major piece was quite geometric, as it was generated around a spherical silver bead. It was a silver pendant which was constructed sculpturally of geometric elements using both silver and plexiglas. The next pendant was also made of sterling silver of constructed elements, but became a bit more organic in progress. Three Baroque pearls added a contrasting element. In contrast to these, the next piece was created with more organic forms. It was forged from sterling silver stock. This piece was done at a time when I was making progress in the development of the ideas in my paintings relating to water forms and motion. These concerns are evident in this piece. Exploration of these forms in metal continued simultaneously as the paintings were being developed.

To express the ideas that concerned me and meet the goals I had set, I determined to paint large format canvases using acrylic paint. 4' x 6' stretchers were built. Canvas was stretched and primed. I readied several in order to be able to work on more than one at a time and to be able to keep a momentum going when generated. To work on this large format, I had to readjust my working procedures. Large airtight containers allowed me to mix and keep paint easily. Mixing many of the colors ahead in quantity made it easier to work quickly. It also meant that I could judge the color relations, one to another, while the paint was still wet. Acrylics often tend to change when the paint has dried. These are subtle differences, but do exist. From the



containers of base colors, I could mix many additional ones as needed. Altering and making slight changes by starting from a pre-mixed base color keys the color, relating it in a harmonious way. Finding brushes that were large enough and worked well, took some research. This was important as one of my goals was the use of the direct line or stroke as an expressive entity, (As opposed to one that consisted of "filling-in" an area with the brush). I experimented with paint viscosities for this same reason. Differing ways of applying the paint were also explored. Acrylic modeling paste and marble dust were used on the canvases where a build up of surface texture was desired. The use of these materials and working methods was evaluated according to its compatibility with my intentions and the aesthetic success.

The final paintings have areas that have been painted in different ways. Some areas are painted with thick impasto paint. Others are painted with layers of thin transparent glazes. The concern for space and structure determined the method chosen. Thus, the use of the materials was influenced by the intent., But the materials and tools chosen also generated new directions as the paintings progressed. The paintings were constructed in many layers. Linear elements were woven and overlapped to build up a textural surface and create a complex spatial system on the picture plane. In some of the paintings, I worked from light to dark when adding layers. In others I reversed this procedure to work from dark to light. The effect of a light glaze over a dark color is very different than a dark glaze over a light area, even if the tonal area is of a similar value. The edges of shapes were varied to provide both separation in some places and visual continuity in others. In this manner the paintings' complexities were constructed.<sup>17</sup>

17. See Illustrations, 15-20.

20.

## CONCLUSION

The exploration and research that has taken place during this Thesis study has produced considerable growth in many areas. In searching out ideas and concepts that had personal meaning, I have learned more about myself, my thought patterns, and my values. In reading about and questioning other artists, I have been presented with many vantage points, differing concerns, and ways of thinking or interpreting. This information, I have attempted to process, assimilate, and understand. In putting these ideas into practice, I have explored many approaches to designing and composing. Problems were set up and solutions sought resulting in new insights and capabilities. New knowledge was gained from exploring other media. All of this investigation and study made this Thesis study a valuable learning experience. It is my intention to continue the search to find ways of translating my ideas and concepts into aesthetically interesting, meaningful, visual form.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abbey, Rita Deanin and G. William Fiero, Art and Geology, (Utah, Gibbs M. Smith, Inc., 1986).
- Arguelles, Jose and Miriam, Mandala, (Boston, Shambhala, 1972).
- Arnheim, Rudolf, The Power of the Center, A study of Composition in the Visual Arts, (Calif., University of California Press, 1982).
- Bagnall, Oscar, The Origin and Properties of the Human Aura, (York Beach, Maine, Samuel Wieser, Inc., 1937).
- Bandler, Richard, Using Your Brain-For a Change, Neuro-linguistic Programming, (Moab, Utah, Real People Press, 1985).
- Berger, John, Ways of Seeing, (Great Britian, BBCand Penguin Books, 1972).
- Brett, Bernard, A History of Watercolor, (New York, Excalibur Books, 1984).
- Buechner, Thomas,(foreward), The Arts of David Levine, (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1978).
- Cezanne. the Late Work, (New York,Museum of Modern Art, 1977).
- Chaet, Bernard, An Artists' Notebook. Technique and Materials, (New York, Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1979).
- Clift, Wallace, Jung and Christianity. The Challenge of Reconciliation, New, Crossroad, 1986).
- Dine, James, Jim Dine Figure, Drawing 1975-1979, (New York, Harper and Row, 1979)
- Feibleman, James, The Quiet Rebellion, (New York, Horizon Press, 1973).
- Feldenkrais, Moshe, The Elusive Obvious, California, Meta Publications, 1981).
- Gawain, Shakti, Creative Visualization, (New York, Bantam Books, 1979).
- Goldwater, Robert, and Marco Treves, Editors, Artists on Art, (New York, Pantheon Books, 1945).

- Heider, John, The Tao of Leadership, Atlanta, Georgia, Humanics New Age, 1985).
- Hoopes, Donelson, Sargent Watercolors, New York, Watson Guptill Pub., 1976).
- Hoopes, Donelson, Winslow Homer Watercolors, (New York, Watson Guptill, 1969).
- Hunter, Sam, and John Jacobus, Modern Art. Painting Sculpture. Architecture, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1976).
- Janssen, Horst, Horst Janssen, (Hamburg, Germany, Brockstedt, 1983).
- Kearns, Martha, Kathe Kollwitz: Woman and Artist, (Old Westbury, New York, The Feminist Press, 1976).
- Langer, Susanne, Feeling and Form. A theory of art, (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953).
- Langer, Susanne, Philosophy in a New Key, (Cambridge, Harvard Press, 1942).
- Larrea, Juan, Guernica. Pablo Picasso, (New York, Arno Press, 1969).
- Loran, Erle, Cézanne's Composition, (Calif., University of California Press, 1943).
- Lord, James, A Giacometti Portrait, (New York, Farrar Straus Giroux, 1965).
- Moore, Henry, and John Hedgcoe, Henry Moore. My Ideas Inspiration and Life as an Artist, (San Francisco, Calif., Chronicle Books, 1986).
- Penrose, Roland, Picasso. His Life and Work, (Calif., University of California Press, 1981).
- Penrose, Roland, Portrait of Picasso, (New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1971).
- Pickvance, Ronald, Van Gogh in Arles, (New York, Harry Abrams, Inc. Pub., Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1984).
- Selz, Jean, Turner, (Bonfini Press, 1977).
- Shahn, Ben, The Shape of Content, (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1967).
- Werner, Alfred, Degas. Pastels, (New York, Watson Guptill, 1967).
- Zigrosser, Carl, Prints and Drawings of Kathe Kollwitz, (New York, Dover Publications, Inc. 1951).



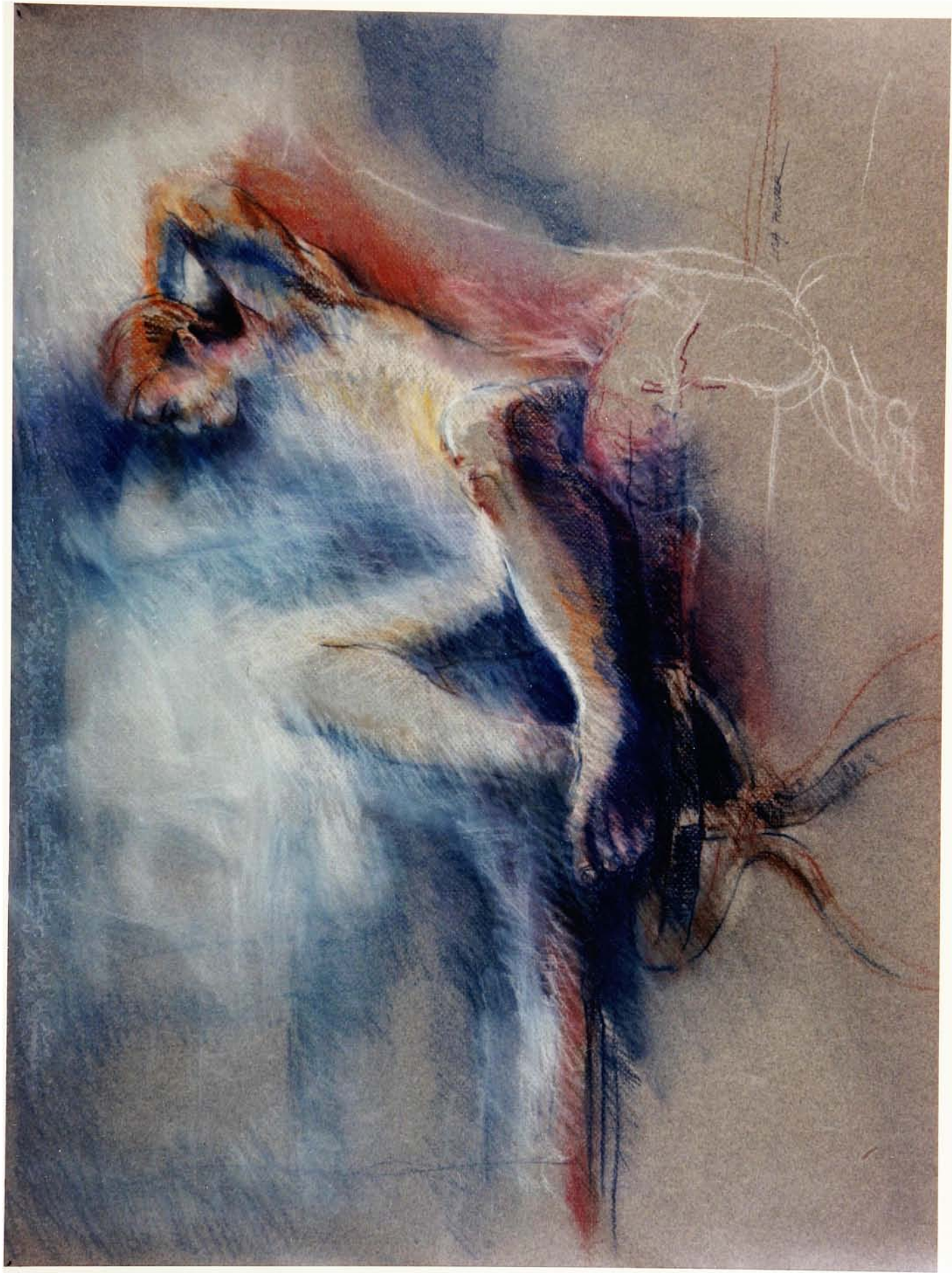


Illustration 1



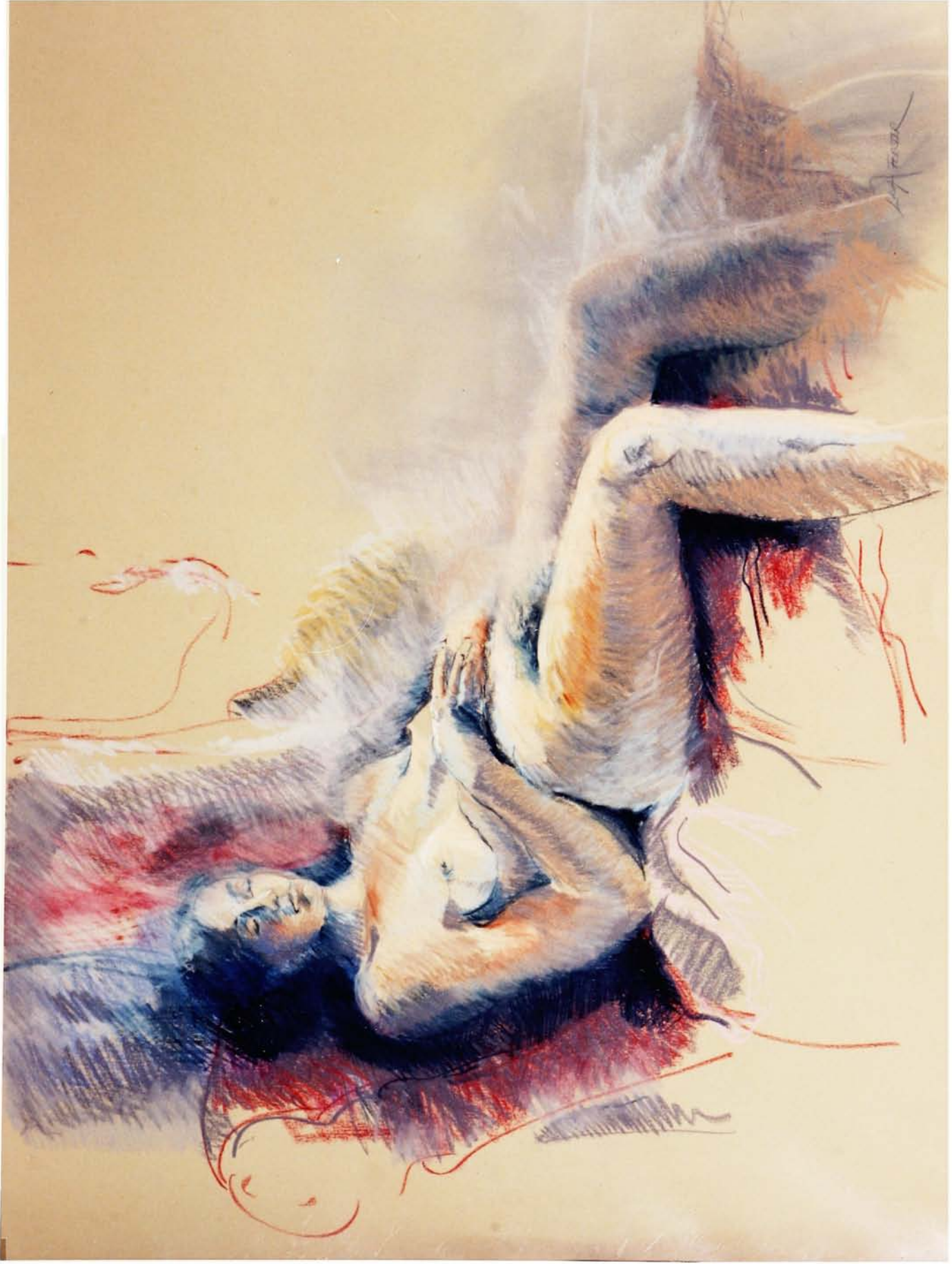


Illustration 2



Illustration 3



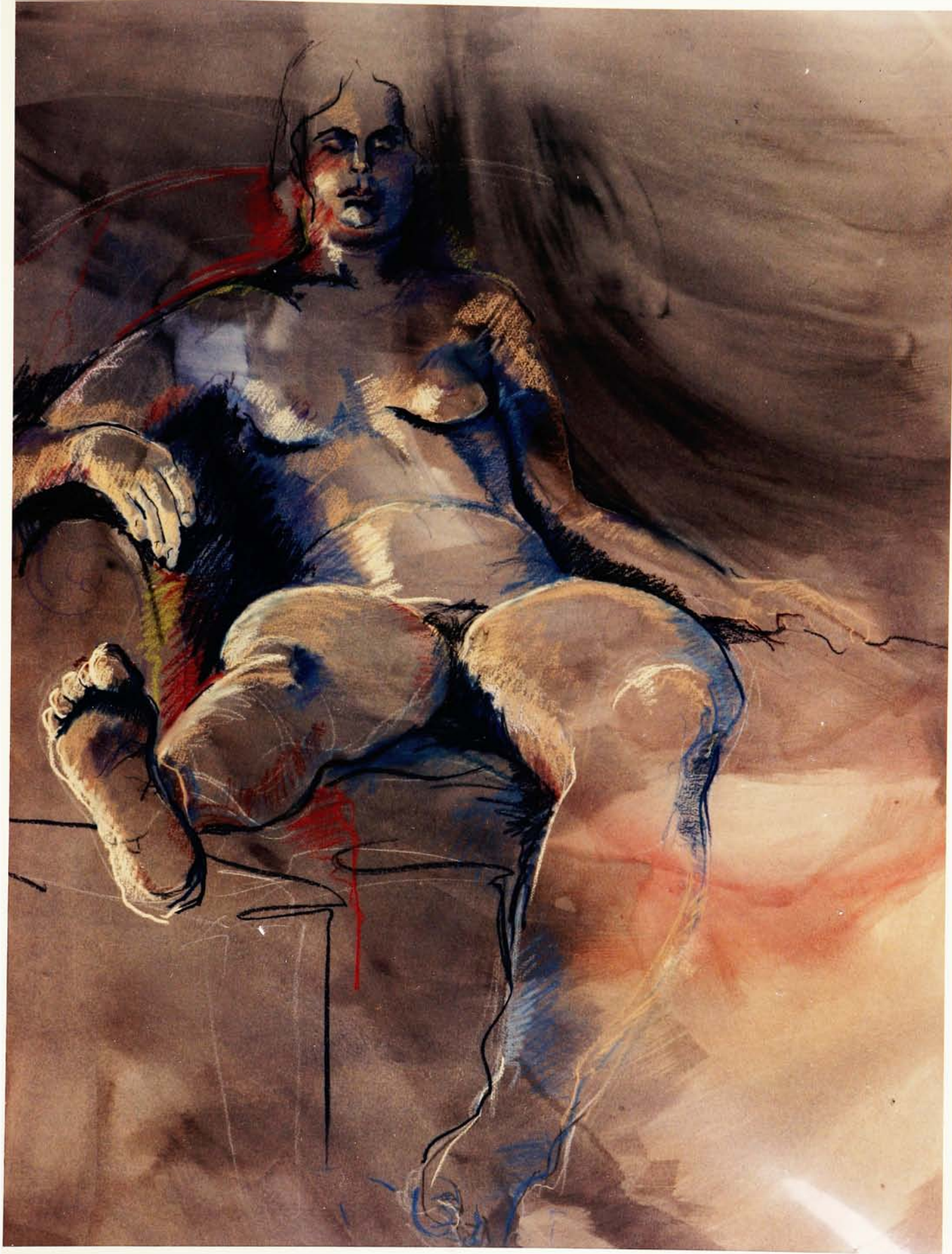


Illustration 4



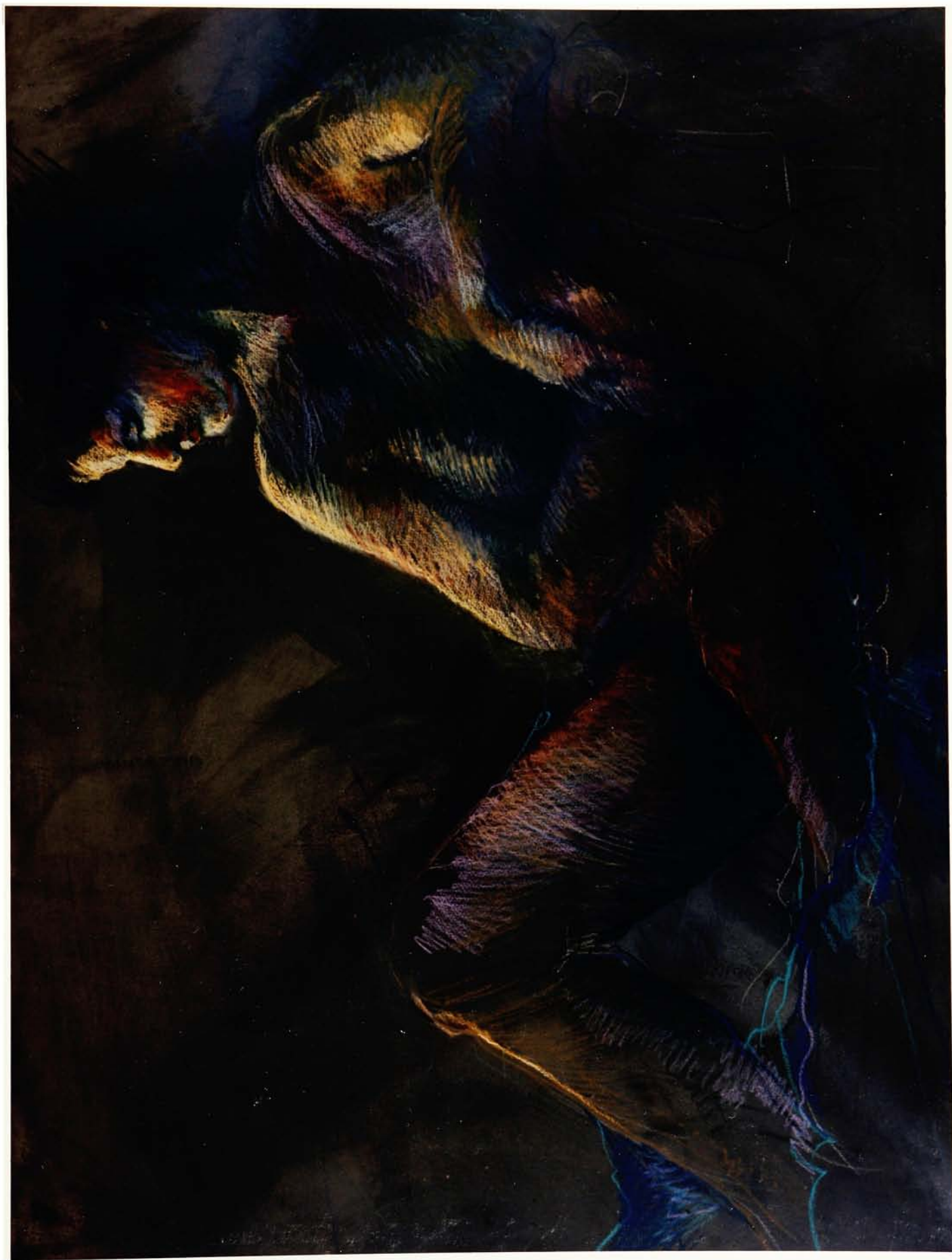


Illustration 5



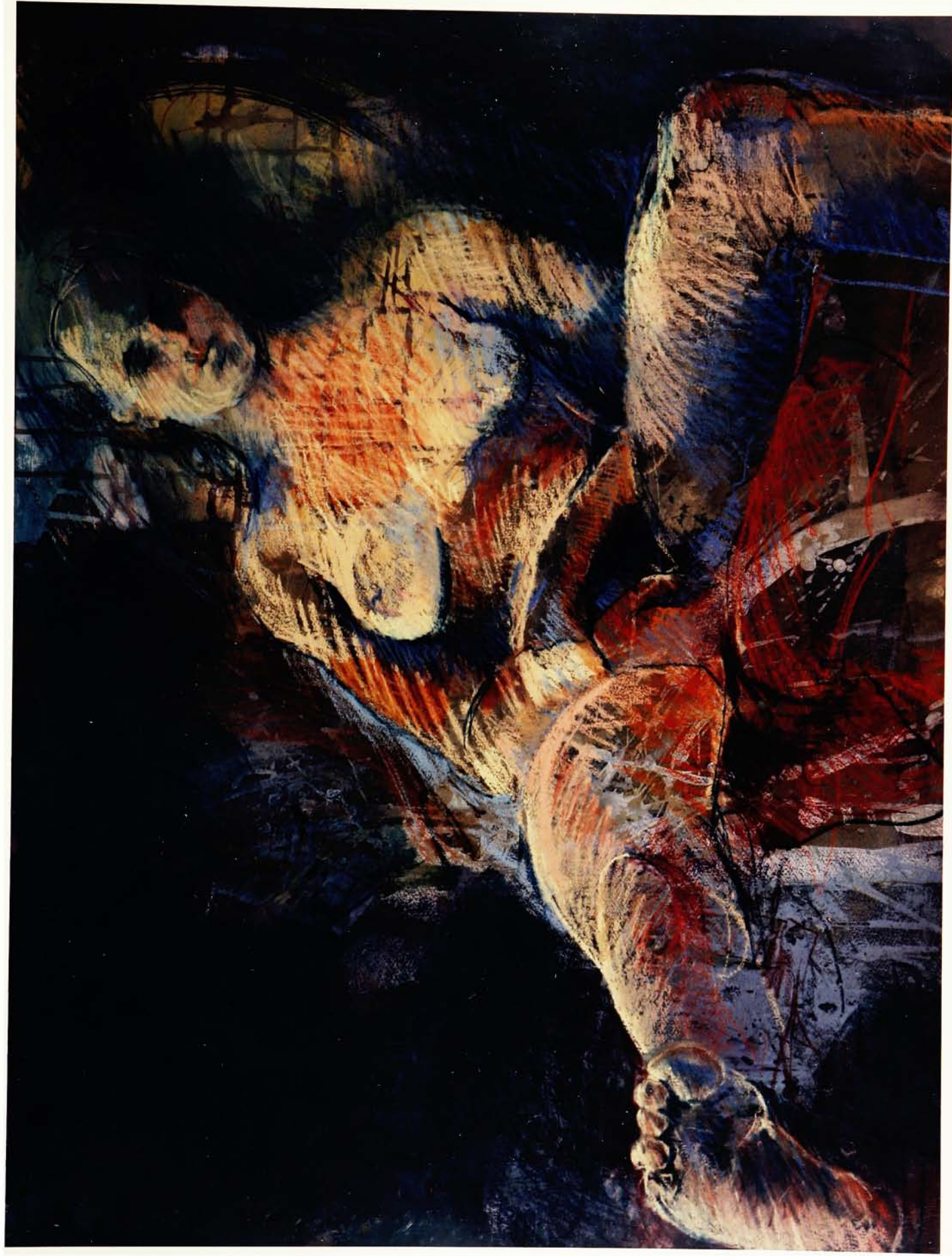


Illustration 6



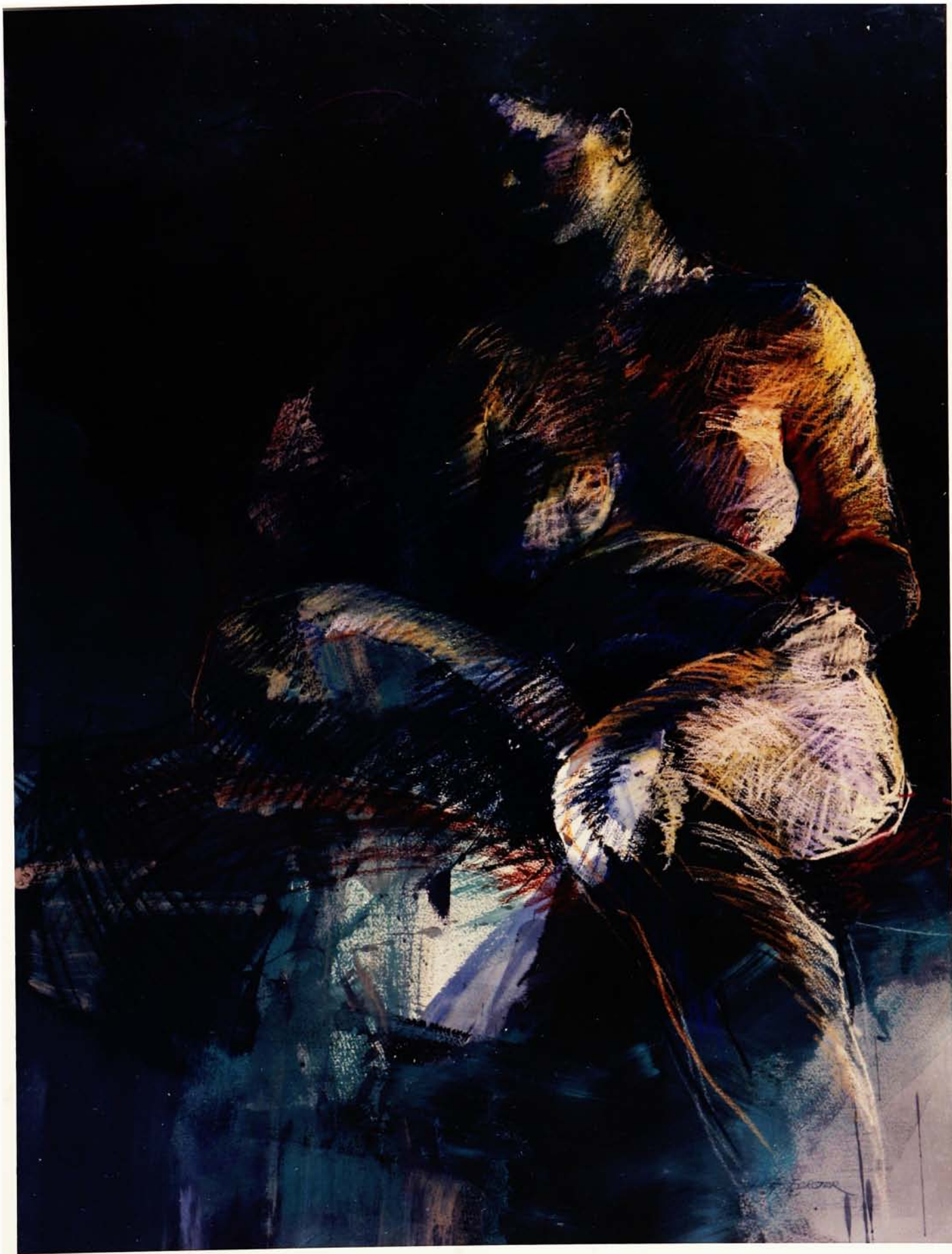


Illustration 7





Illustration 8



Illustration 9



Illustration 10

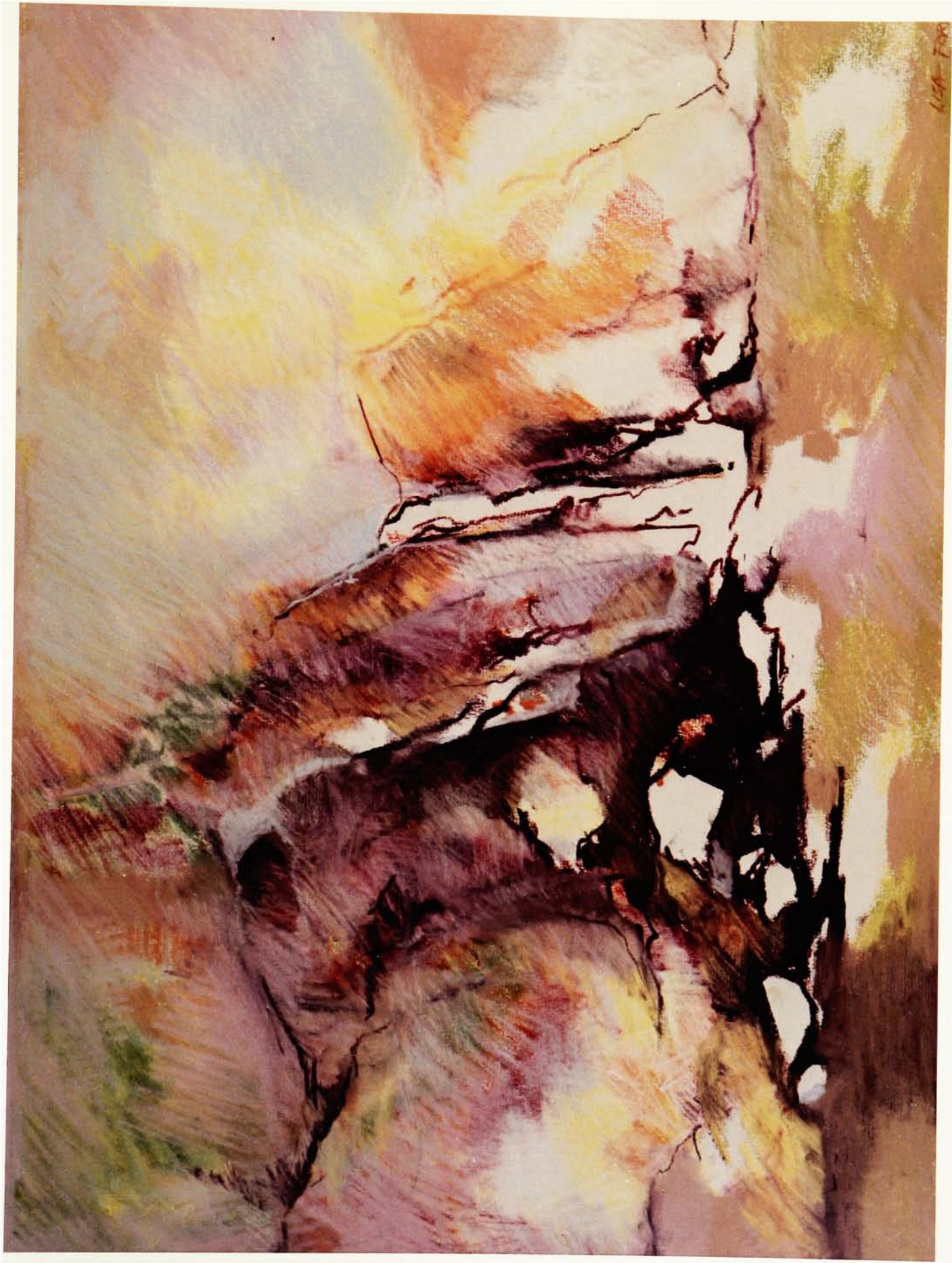


Illustration 11



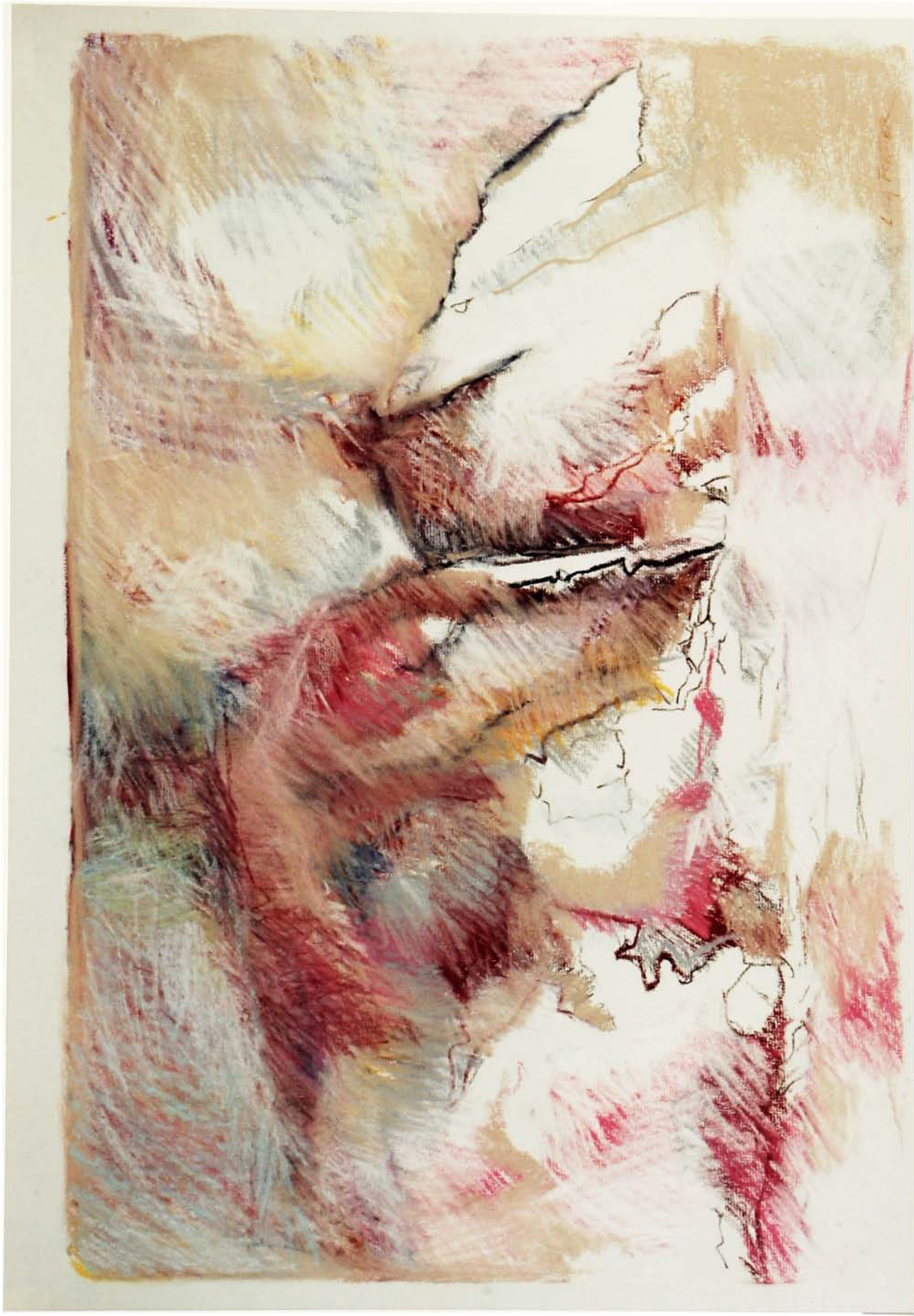


Illustration 12



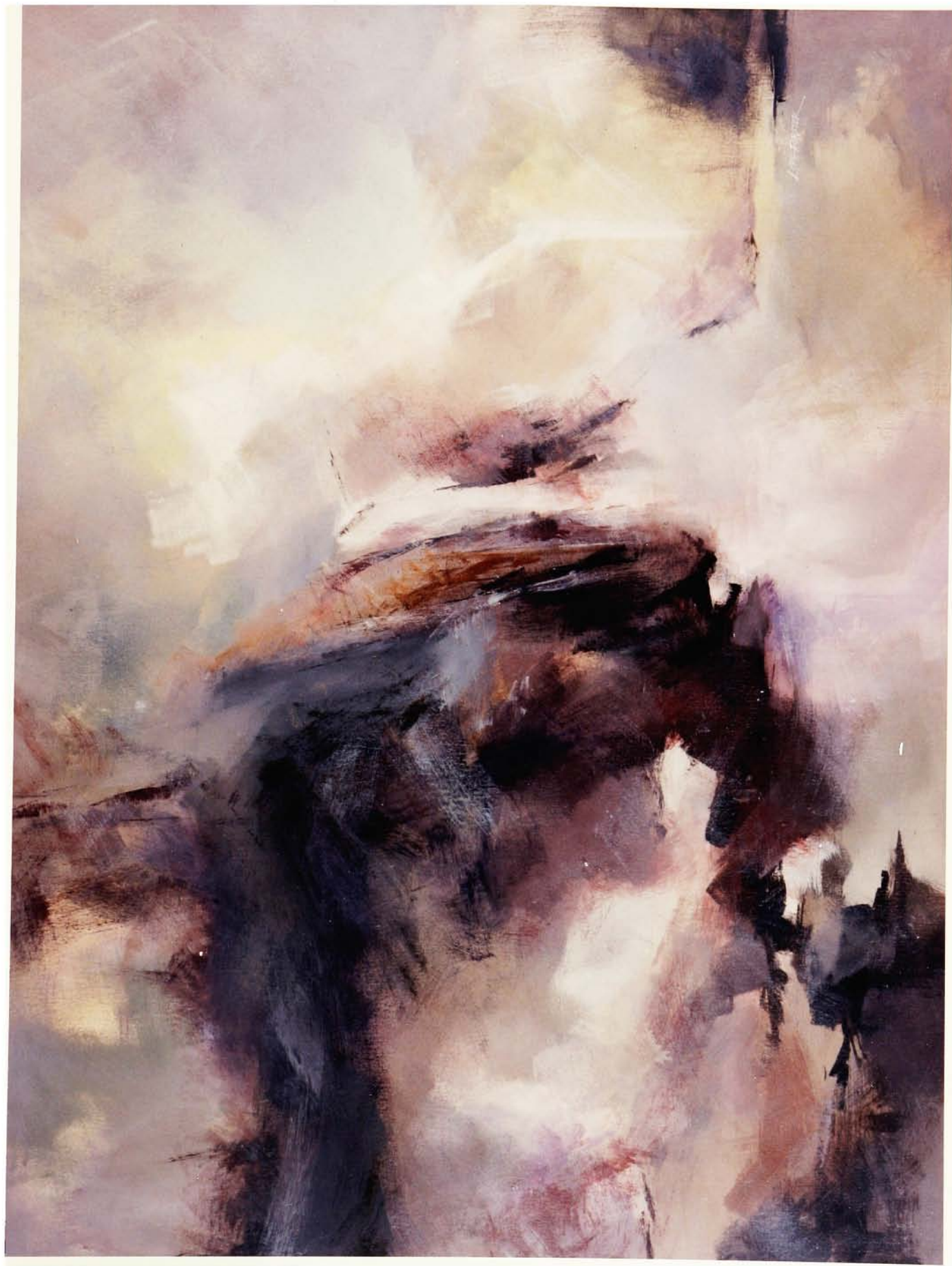


Illustration 13



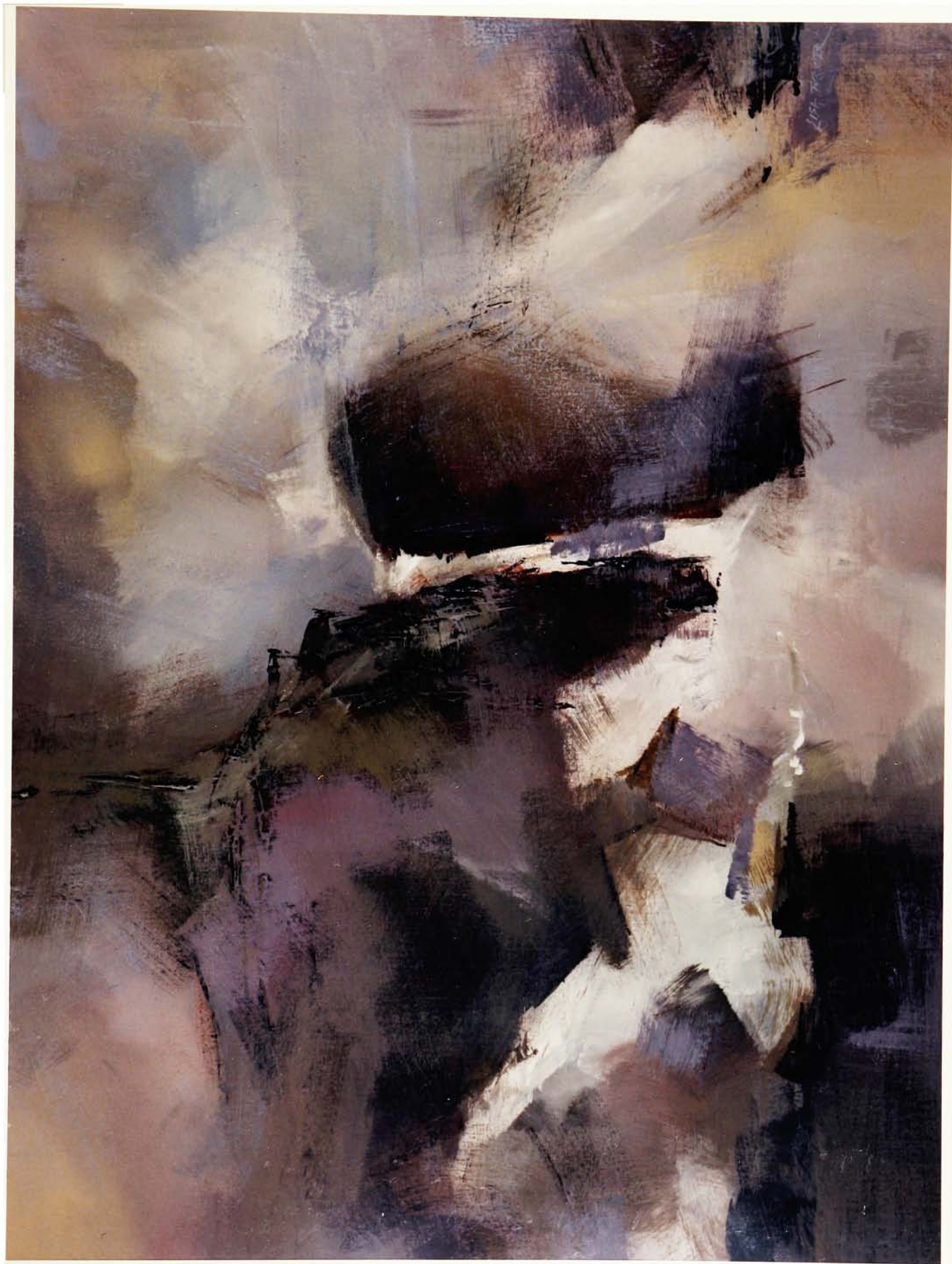


Illustration 14



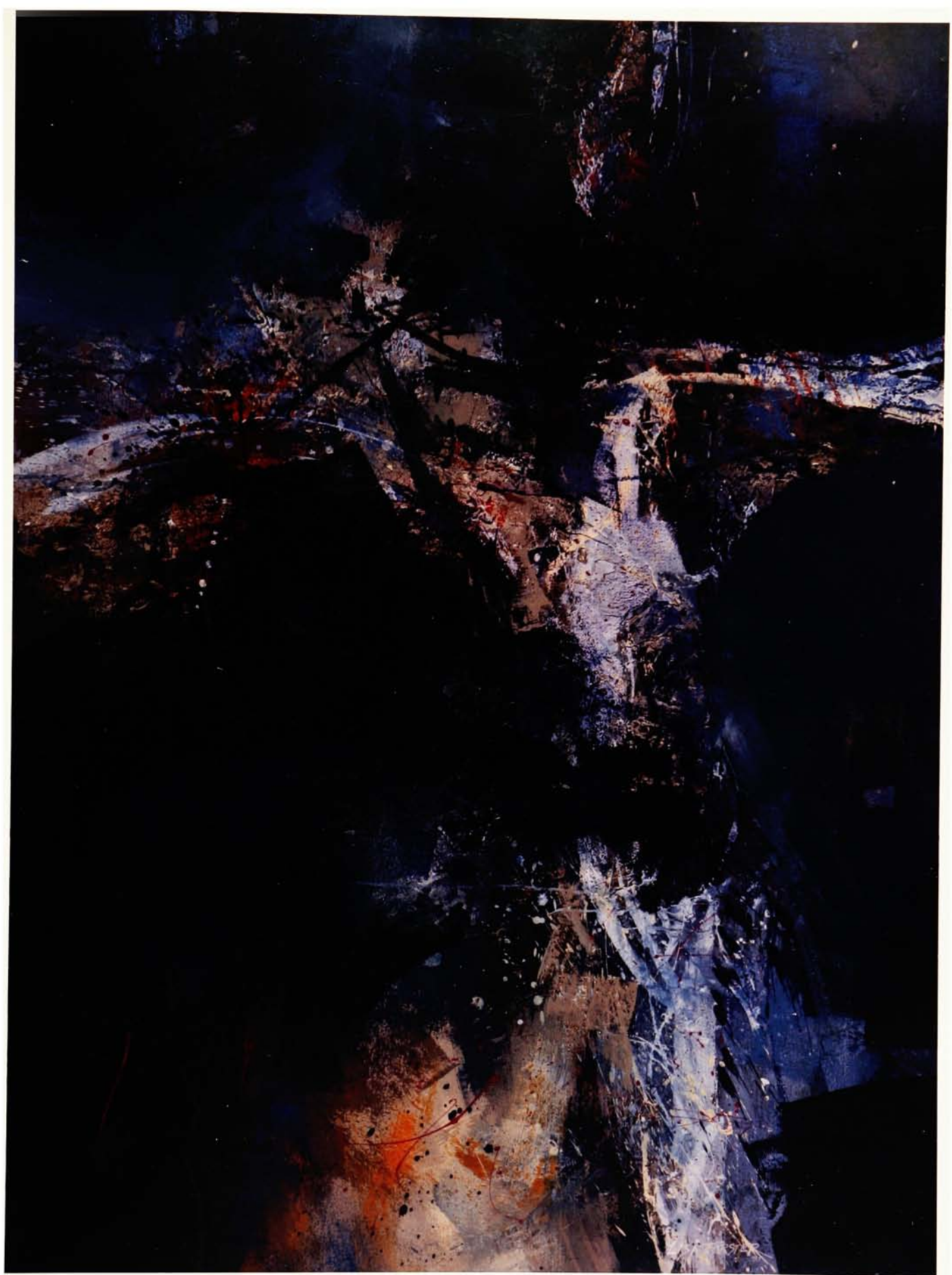


Illustration 15



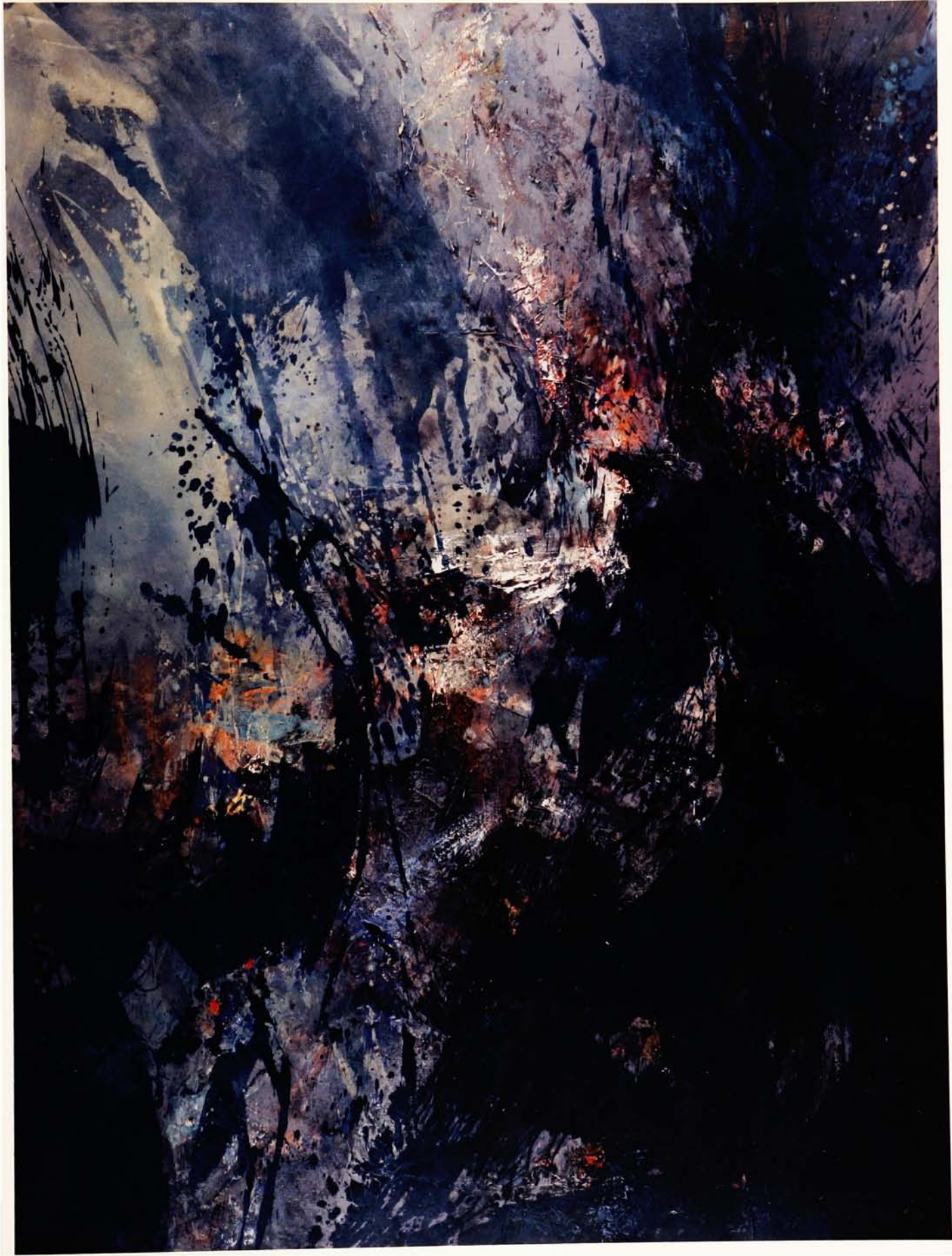


Illustration 16



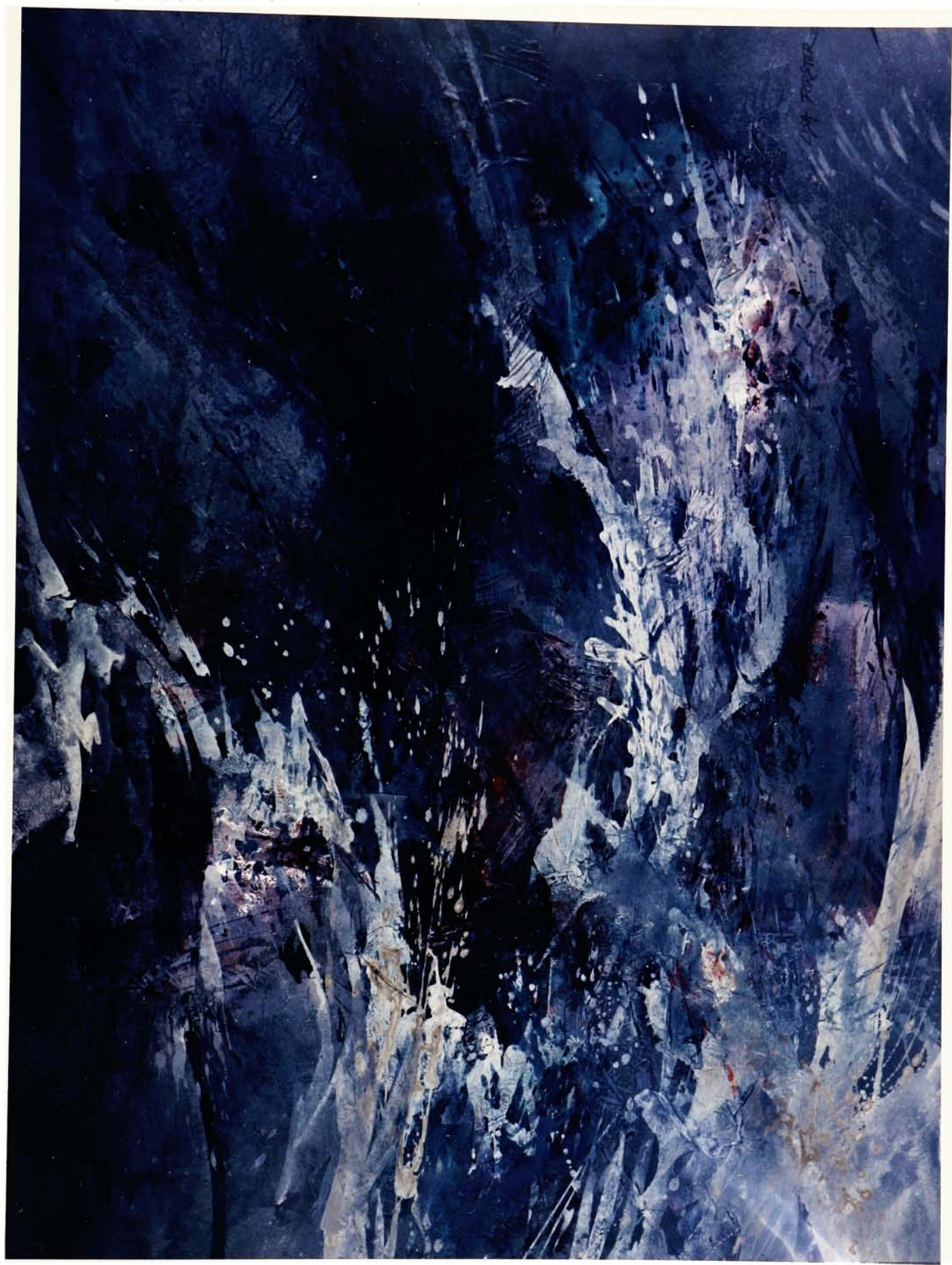


Illustration 17





Illustration 18



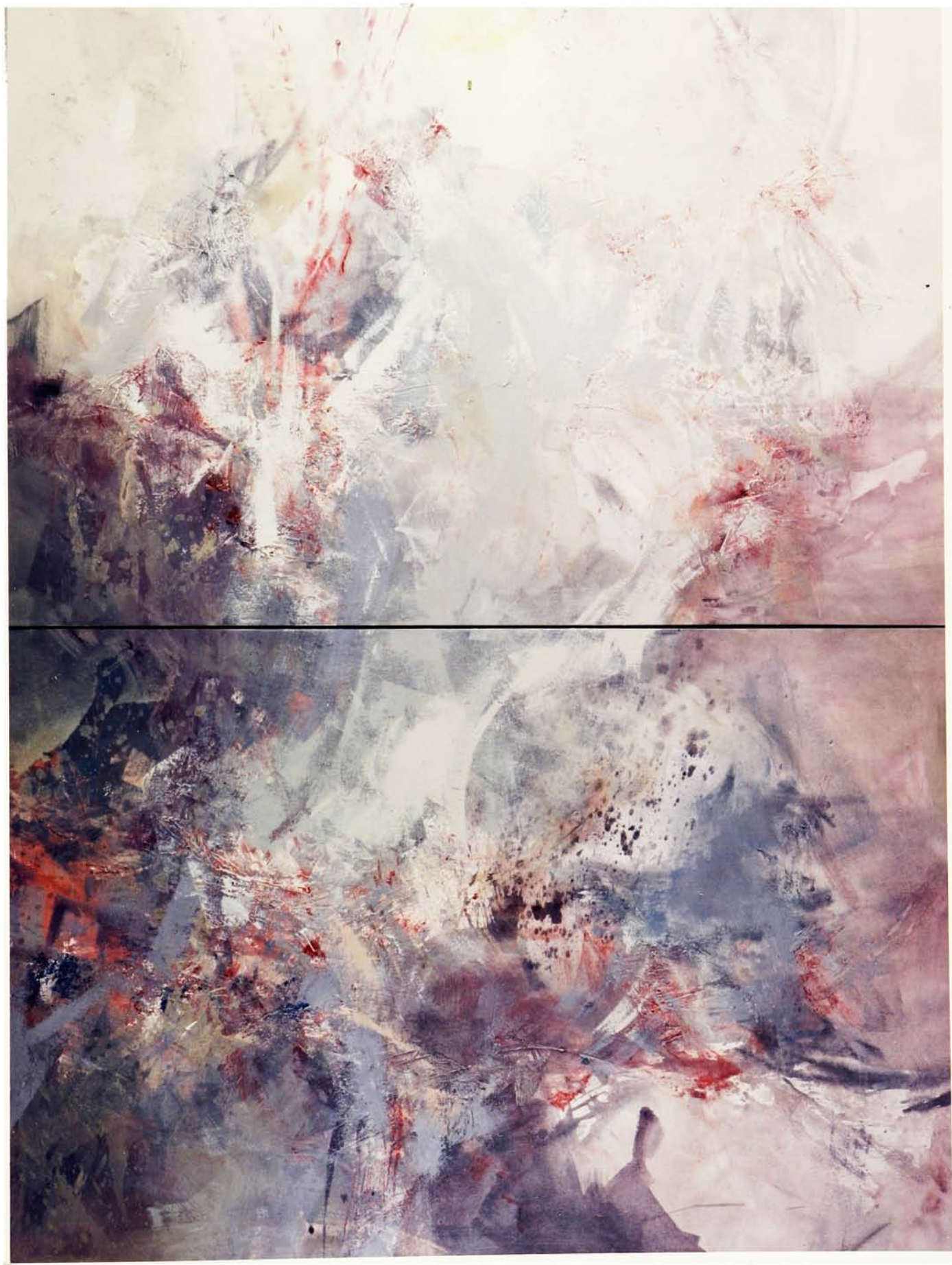


Illustration 19